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ABSTRACT

This document reports the proceedings of a conference held in Brussels to take stock (on the basis of the studies conducted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and the analyses carried out in this field in all the European Community member states) of the work undertaken in the last few years and to present suggestions, proposals, and recommendations for the future development of the social dialogue in the field of vocational training. The following articles are included in the report: (1) "Summary of Conference and Results" (Burkhart Sellin); (2) "Economic and Social Cohesion and the Dialogue with the Social Partners in the European Community" (Peter Schmidhuber); (3) "Promotion of the Dialogue at Inter-occupational Level on the Basis of the Val Duchesse Agreement of March 1987"--summary of the introduction (Gunter Kopke), summary of the working group results (Duilio Silletti); (4) "Development of the Social Dialogue at Sectoral Level" --introduction (Enrique Retuerto de la Torre), summary of the working group results (Peter Grootings); (5) "The Role of the Two Sides of Industry at the Regional Level"--summary of the paper (Paolo Garonna), summary of the working group results (Werner Low); and (6) "Social Dialogue at Company Level"--summary of the introduction (Alain d'Iribane), summary of the working group results (Herbert Nierhaus). Appendixes to the report include the March 1987 Agreement (Val Duchesse) and a list of conference participants. (KC)

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CEDEFOP Document

The role of the two sides of industry in initial and continuing training Documentation of the conference on 8 and 9 November 1988 in Brussels

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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1. Summary of conference and results

Burkart Sellin, CEDEFOP Project coordinator

I. Aims and objectives of the conference

1. The purpose of the conference was to take stock - on the basis of the studies conducted by CEDEFOP and the analyses carried out in this field in all the Member States - of the work undertaken in the last few years and to present suggestions, proposals and recommendations for the future development of the social dialogue in the field of vocational training. A summary report prepared by CEDEFOP and several articles in the CEDEFOP Bulletin "Vocational Training" No. 2/88 contain some conrete proposals on this subject (see bibliography).

2. Against the background of the "Perspectives for the establishment of the EC internal market by 1992" the question to be studied was, whether and to what extent the EC could and should initiate and support social dialogue or take direct action to develop this dialogue between the trade unions and the employers' organizations on questions relating to vocational training and continuing training, new qualifications and related conditions. The central question was the improvement of social cohesion and the development of the social dialogue within the context of the international market in the "1992 perspective".

II. The conference

1. The conference was held on the premises of the Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. About 150 participants from the twelve Member States had been invited by the organizers. The welcoming addresses were given by Mr. Alberto Masprone, President of the ESC and Mr. Ernst Piehl, Director of CEDEFOP. The delegates from government agencies, trade unions and employers' organizations - in particular their federation and sectoral organizations -, members of the Economic and Social Committee and CEDEFOP's Management Board, and the researches who had carried out the studies, had the opportunity of listening to the positions taken by the spokesmen of the associations on the subject "The challenge of 1992 for the social partners". After that the participants formed four working groups which dealt with the following topics:

- "The development of dialogue at inter-occupational level on the basis of the March 1987 Agreement (Val Duchesse)"
- "The development of dialogue at sectoral level"
- "The role of the two sides of industry at regional level"
- "Social dialogue at company level"

2. The reports of the working groups were presented and discussed during the closing plenary session and then, with Mr. Jean Degimbe, the Director-General for Social Affaires, Education and Employment, in the chair, the representatives of the organizing bodies drew their conclusions and listed further proposals.

III. Introductory paper presented by the EC Commissioner Mr. Peter Schmidhuber

1. Speaking on the subject "Economic and social cohesion and the dialogue with the social partners in the Community", the member of the Commission summarized the main medium-term economic and social goals were:

- the completion and exploitation of the advantages of the internal market,
- the strengthening of economic and social cohesion,
  and
- the elimination of unemployment".

Powerful and sustained economic growth was necessary to attain these goals, considerable success had already been achieved in this field in the course of this year:

With a probable growth rate of 3,5% and an increase in capital goods investment of 7%, employment would rise by 1% in 1988, whereby the increase in prices would remain at a moderate level of 3,5% with a simultaneous "downward convergence of inflation rates".

2. The speaker went on to say that economic cohesion could be viewed under two mutually complementary aspects:

- under the aspect of the regional dimension,
  and
- under the aspect of the social dimension which required a strengthening of the social dialogue.

The necessity of bringing about a balance between the regions had become a leading question through the accession of less prosperous countries. Article 130 of the Treaties was the basis for appropriate action. Decisions had already been taken on doubling

the resources of the Structural Funds by 1993 and on concentrated use of these resources. From 1993 onwards some 15 billion ECU would be available for the Structural Funds.

The Regulation on the "Tasks and Effectiveness of the Structural Funds" adopted by the Council on 24.6.1988 set out five objectives:

- Objective 1, "promoting the development and structural adjustment of the regions whose development is lagging behind". These regions were those whose per capita Gross Domestic Product was less than 75% of the Community average. Through this the action taken by the Community would be concentrated on a geographical area in which some 20% of the population lived. In concrete terms this included the whole of Portugal, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Greece, Southern Italy and large areas of Spain.

- Objective 2 had the aim of "converting the regions seriously affected by industrial decline" and "facilitating the re-structuring of industrial sectors in decline" such as steel, ship-building, coal and textiles. Decling industrial areas comprised regions with a high rate of unemployment. These areas were to be determined through specific criteria such as unemployment rate, trends in employment and industrial employment.

- Objective 3 "combating long-term unemployment" and Objective 4 "facilitating the occupational integration of young people" affected all Member States. In order to have functional concentration, there would be a restricted number of operational programmes for combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the occupational integration of young people.

- Objective 5 dealt with rural areas and aimed at "speeding up the adjustment of agricultural structures" and "promoting the development of rural areas". The development of rural areas was also to be undertaken according to criteria which would ensure an appropriate geographical concentration, however, it was up to the Member States to propose the rural regions which they felt faced the greatest difficulties as the regions for assistance.

"Integrated programmes" and support networks were to be set up for regional assistance; this would consist of economic and social measures including vocational training and continuing training schemes with greater emphasis on local conditions. Monitoring activities, the use of technical advisors and the development of "partnerships" would ensure that these programmes were really developed as additional operations to ongoing programmes and schemes in the Member States.

The participation of the social partners - both in the committee concerned and in the "partnerships" being set up for the development of regional support networks - continued to be an urgent necessity for the Funds.

With reference to the social dimension the speaker went on to say that

- there was no intention of setting up a comprehensive Community-wide social security system "which would replace the national systems or be superimposed on them",

- two important articles had been added to the social policy provisions of the EEC Treaty: Article 118a, - an additional task for the Community to ensure the protections of workers at their place of work - which stipulated that the Community should try to encourage "improvements, especially in the working environment, as regards the health and safety of workers ..."; and Article 118b, - the creation of a legal basis for a type of "concerted action" in Europe - where the Commission would try to "develop the dialogue between management and labour at European level which could, if the two sides consider it desirable, lead to relations based on agreement".

At the end of his presentation the speaker enumerated the different priorities for socio-political action such as:

- promotion of the mobility and freedom of movement of workers, including recognition of diplomas,
- promotion of cooperation between universities and student exchange (ERASMUS),
- promotion of cooperation between the universities of the Member States and companies in the field of information technology,
- measures to combat negative effects on the labour markets,
- training, continuing training and re-training to reduce the unemployment of youth and women, and measures for the occupational reintegration of the long-term unemployed,
- incentives to attract new industries to structurally weak regions.

All these measures should be implemented or developed further in agreement with the two sides of industry, and the "social dialogue" between representatives of the employers' organizations (Union of Industries of the European Community and European Centre of Public Enterprise) and the trade unions (European Trade Union Confederation) had been established as a platform for the Community. This "social dialogue" would gain considerable significance together with the neces-

sity of "regulating certain aspects of labour relations throughout Europe", in particular on the basis of Article 118b of the Treaty.

IV. The challenge of 1992 for the social partners

With Mr. Jacques Moreau, the Secretary-General of the ESC, in the chair, there was a discussion between representatives of the ETUC, UNICE/CLE, CEEP and the "Other interests" Section of the ESC.

Mr. Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz, the Secretary-General of CLE/UNICE spoke against an over-estimation of socio-political questions, against negotiations within the context of the social dialogue and interventions at EC level in matters concerning collective agreements and labour legislation. He saw possibilities for a dialogue in "such issues as training", provided that this did not lead to legally binding consequences for labour relations. First and foremost, the barriers between companies and workers had to be removed.

Jean Lapayre, Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, called for more comprehensible rules and a European Social Charter to safeguard workers' rights and to lay down minimum social security standards. He viewed social dialogue as something more than just a platform for information and consultation and felt that the social partners should be given an active role in the development of the social dimension of the internal market. If a socio-political dimension was not developed at the same time, the internal market would have no prospects. New barriers would be created instead of old barriers being dismantled.

The Chairman of CEDEFOP's Management Board, Mr. A.H. Koelink, stressed - as the ESC representatives did - the importance of the participation of the social partners in vocational training, as CEDEFOP had practised for years. Without the inclusion of the social partners and the years of preliminary work undertaken by CEDEFOP, many initiatives and programmes at EC level and in many Member States would not have been carried out. He particularly stressed the work done by CEDEFOP, in the field of mutual recognition or comparability of vocational qualifications and the development of decision aids for the renovation of the vocational training system and vocational qualifications in view of the challenges of 1992. He underlined the importance of vocational training for the development of social cohesion in the EC, for more free movement of the working population and the development of a European labour market.

The other members of the panel wanted faster and more effective progress in EC Social policy and the development of a Community vocational training and continuing training policy. A great effort was required in the field of continuing training, re-training and further training of the working population, and no group should close its eyes to this. Here, social dialogue could have a great impact.

V. The results of the working parties

1. The Director of the European Trade Union Institute, Mr. Günter Köpke, introduced the topic discussed by Working Group I. His views were mostly shared by the participants. He was in favour of a reinforcement of the social dialogue at inter-occupational and EC level, however, it had to be geared more to national and sectoral efforts. The re-structuring process which had been deliberately encouraged in view of the internal market could only be a success and have social impact if the continuing training of the workers was undertaken in good time. This meant that the EC had a specific social responsibility.

In the discussion it was questioned whether the EC should play a role in the development of qualification standards and their harmonization, although the necessity of ensuring sufficient quantitative qualifications and certain minimum requirements was stressed.

The necessity for the social partners to participate in questions of vocational training - especially continuing training - and the socially compatible structure of work organization, was generally recognized. In many cases a consensus would even be required before the Government could adopt legislation. This implied not only the need for information and consultation but also the need for institutionally backed participation at all levels of action, including the EC level.

The pre-requisites for this already existed in the form of committees and CEDEFOP. But they had to be put to better use, inter alia, by the EC Commission itself.

2. The dialogue at sectoral level was particularly important, especially as conditions varied considerably in the different sectors. This was emphasized by Mr. Enrique Retuerto de la Torre who introduced the topic of Working Group II. One of the preconditions for this was agreement on existing qualifications and future requirements. The EC programme to bring about the "comparability of vocation qualifications" (cf. Council Decision of July 1985) would play a prominent role in this context. This work was to be continued more intensively and would be accompanied up to 1992 by a comprehensive development of occupational descriptions.

The joint sectoral committees in the EC Commission would be activated and given clear terms of reference. Positive results had already been obtained in the sectors "Construction" and "Retail trade".

3. Mr. Paolo Garonna, who was responsible for the CEDEFOP study on the situation in Italy, introduced the "regional level". The necessity of having a more consistent "global approach" to assist the regions was stressed; here, economic, social and qualification-oriented measures had to be linked to one another.

With the existing support networks the social partners would run the risk of not being adequately included in activities at regional level.

The institutional pre-requisites varied considerably from Member State to Member State; in many cases they still had to be created.

Partnerships should be developed not only vertically, i.e. between the EC, the Governments of the Member States and the regions, but also horizontally, i.e. at regional level and between regions at different levels of development. Transnational cooperation was also to be strengthened. Vocational training institutions should set up more partnerships and extend their work across borders.

In the discussion it was stressed that the development of integrated programme planning was not possible between public authorities alone. The agents of development, i.e. the companies and the workers, had to be included right from the outset. A high level of occupational qualification in a region meant it had locational advantages. There was the danger that highly developed regions would increasingly attract highly qualified manpower; the exodus of qualified manpower from structurally weak regions should be combated through integrated programmes in which qualification and the creation of new employment would go hand in hand; the workers should be induced to establish new businesses and participate in product development and the design of their workplaces in order to ensure the survival of the companies in these regions and to improve working conditions.

4. Mr. Alain d'Iribarne, Research Director of CNRS in Paris, introduced the "company level".

The company level was the basis for dialogue at al other levels. On the other hand, the companies were the real targets for dialogue at the higher levels.

The slogan "less state intervention and more freedom for the companies" had been re-discovered since the beginning of the 1980s after aperiod in which global social interests prevailed. In the fields of vocational training and continuing training, more emphasis was now being put on the companies. They, on the other hand, were discovering the importance of vocational training as a means of strengthening their competitive position and their capacity to rejuvenate.

At company level, however, the trade unions were facing great difficulties in view of rising unemployment and the menacing implications for the workers. The trade unions were being given tasks such as of structural change, etc. for which they were often not sufficiently equipped. Other social institutions tended to back out of these tasks and often refused to give the companies and the trade unions the legal foundations and the instruments needed to enable the two sides of industry to fulfil these tasks. The scope and degree of participation were not clarified, the financial conditions for vocational training and continuing training in the company remained obscure and were subject to short-term political expediencies and powerful company-specific interests, etc.

The EC should, on the basis of the given situation in each Member State, try to bring about a functional integration of the institutional pre-requisites for dialogue, without, however, insisting on its formal uniformity. To this end, the protagonists at regional and local level should be strengthened and the company should become a place of social innovation. The pre-condition for this was the balanced capacity of both sides to enter into true negotiations.

Several controversial contributions resulted from this introduction, without any clear conclusions being drawn. The significance of the company as the central place for "social innovation" was uncontested. Emphasis was placed firstly, on the necessity of in-company and supra-company training together with an intensive cooperation of all parties involved including the public authorities, and secondly, on the central role of vocational and continuing training in the maintenance of competitiveness.

VI. Concluding panel discussion and practical conclusions

Under the direction of Ernst Piehl, Director of CEDEFOP, and Jean Degimbe, Director-General in the EC Commission, the reports of the four working groups were discussed and further suggestions were made.

- The EC Commission has put the subject "Continuing training" on the agenda of the next meetings of the "Standing Committee on Employment in the

European Communities", and will include the two sides of industry to a greater extent than it did in the past. It will also consult them more when development proposals for the recognition of vocational certificates and diplomas while continuing its work on the comparability of vocational qualifications, where they are already strongly involved.

- The Economic and Social Committee of the EC is considering preparation of an initiative opinion on the subject and continues to offer itself as a forum for social dialogue. The Chairman of the Section for Social Questions, Mr. John Carroll, congratulated CEDEFOP on the excellent work it had done and expressed the hope that cooperation would be intensified by 1992.

- The ETUC and the European employers' organizations UNICE and CEEP are awaiting clear declarations on social dialogue and the socio-political dimension of the EC at the next summit in Greece and the meeting in early 1989 between the two sides of industry and the Commission; the next steps to be taken in the field of vocational training and continuing training would then emerge.

- CEDEFOP will at first inform the relevant groups and the public circles interested in social dialogue in the Member States of the results of the conference. In the next four-year period up to the end of 1992 the following activities will be given priority:

a) Continuation of the research work in selected sectors (e.g. metalworking, construction and banking, which represent different types of social partner participation) and some companies.

b) Preparation, co-organization and evaluation of "Round-Table-Workshops" in the 12 Member States (three per year if possible, beginning in 1989, most probably with Spain, France and Denmark), in which the following groups of participants would be invited to discuss the "Development of social dialogue in questions relating to vocational training and continuing training in selected sectors at regional and local level and in companies and administrations":

- Employers' and employees' organizations,
- members of CEDEFOP's Management Board and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training of the EC Commission,
- members of the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament, and
- other persons interested in social dialogue in the countries concerned (scientists, labour offices, regional and local government authorities, etc.).

c) Preparation, co-organization (together with other interested EC institutions) and evaluation of two more colloquies at EC level (planned for 1990 in Berlin and autumn 1992 in Brussels) which will serve to take stock and make further comparisons of the growing role of the social partners in vocational training in the EC.

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* *A summary in all nine languages is available*

List of abbreviations

CEEP	-	European Centre of Public Enterprise (Centre européen de l'entreprise publique)
CLE/UNICE	-	Employers' Liaison Committee (Comité de liaison d'employeurs) / Union of Industries of the European Community (Union des confédérations de l'industrie et des employeurs d'Europe)
CNRS	-	Centre national de la recherche scientifique (National centre for scientific research)
ETUC	-	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUI	-	European Trade Union Institute
ESC	-	Economic and Social Committee

2. Economic and social cohesion and the dialogue with the social partners in the Community

Peter Schmidhuber, member of the Commission

The subject "Economic and social cohesion in the Community and the dialogue with the social partners" addresses one of the main medium-term economic and socio-political goals of the Community. These goals are:

- the completion and exploitation of the advantages of the internal market;
- the strengthening of economic and social cohesion, and
- the elimination of unemployment.

One prerequisite for attaining these goals is powerful and sustained economic growth. Just this year the Community has achieved considerable success as it moves in this direction. The EC Commission's 1988-89 Annual Report on the economic situation in the Community that I presented recently - on October 19th - shows that the economic situation in the Community is good.

In 1988 the Community's economic growth should amount to 3.5%, with a 7% increase in capital goods investment serving as the engine of economic growth. Employment is expected to rise by more than 1%. The increase in prices should remain at a moderate level of 3.5%, and the downward convergence of inflation rates has made considerable progress. Not since the 1960s has there been such a favourable combination of key economic data in Europe - economic growth at a time of stability.

Now it is essential to take advantage of this opportunity, to maintain the sustained and strengthening economic growth of about 2.5% to just under 3% annually that we have experienced during the past five years along with an almost 1% increase in employment and, if possible, to intensify it further on a sound economic basis during the coming years. By acting decisively to establish the internal market, by accelerating the catching-up process for the less favoured countries and regions, and by continuing to pursue a sound economic policy based on the guidelines of the cooperative growth strategy to increase employment, the Community has an opportunity to make the 1988 growth rate of 3.5% one that continues to be achieved in the medium term or is even surpassed. Should this succeed, employment could increase by about 1.5% annually. Even though the labour supply is continuing to increase due to demographic developments and the growing participation of women in the labour force, such growth would be sufficient to reduce the unemployment rate by 1% annually, which would be a very encouraging prospect. To make a cautious assessment, in my opinion the situation is finally beginning to improve - also with regard to employment.

In order to achieve this, the Community has developed a coherent economic policy concept, which was presented in the annual economic reports of the past years as well as in the 1988-89 Annual Report and has met with widespread approval. The completion of the internal market, the strengthening of economic and social cohesion in the Community, and the cooperative growth strategy for increased employment supplement each other to comprise an effective economic and employment strategy. Applying these three concepts simultaneously as a "package" means undertaking a far-reaching initiative to increase growth and employment in Europe.

These are the approaches being taken to achieve the goal "economic and social cohesion of the Community" within the framework of the Community's major economic and social policy goals and projects. Economic and social cohesion can be viewed under two mutually complementary aspects:

1. the regional dimension, which means that the catching-up process in the less favoured countries and regions must be accelerated, and

2 the social dimension, which requires both a European social policy and a strengthening of the social dialogue.

Let us remember: The regional dimension of the Community's economic and social cohesion was already established in the Treaties of Rome. In the Preamble of the EEC Treaty the parties agree "to ensure ... harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions".

With regard to the six original Member States and even in the Nine-Member Community, except for Ireland, differences in per capita GDP have decreased considerably and are now tolerable on a country-by-country basis. However, when relatively less prosperous countries entered the Community in the 1980s, the regional differences within the now larger Community again increased.

Therefore one of the main objectives of the Single European Act, as expressed in Article 130a, is to strengthen economic and social cohesion and lessen regional differences in the Community. Article 130b expressly states: "Member States shall conduct their economic policies, and shall coordinate them, in such as way as, in addition, to attain the objectives set...". Furthermore, Article 130b requires that common policies, measures taken in the internal market, the Structural Funds, the European Investment Bank, and other available financing instruments also be directed toward achieving these goals. Besides this, Article 130c specifically includes readjustment in declining industrial areas in the list of tasks to be accomplished.

I would now like to present some facts with regard to the regional dimension:

- At present about one fifth of the enlarged Community's population lives in underdeveloped areas. Measured in terms of GDP per inhabitant living there, the income level was 46% below the Community average in Portugal and Greece, 36% less in Ireland, and 26% lower in Spain. If we move down to the level of the individual regions, in terms of per capita GDP the disparities in the expanded Community are as great as 1:6.

- Enormous disparities also exist in connection with employment. Unemployment in Spain is almost double the average for the Community as a whole. Here it is above all the large percentage of young unemployed people that gives cause for concern. Demographic developments will tend to make the problem worse. While population figures in the Community as a whole will enter a phase of stagnation during the coming years, a continued large population increase can be expected in underdeveloped regions with a relatively young population.

Considering these few facts makes clear why our efforts to safeguard the social and economic cohesion of the Community, to establish equality of opportunity, and to cushion the impact of structural adjustments - in short, to intensify cohesion - are so important.

The Community is now in the process of establishing a great single market by 1992. Completion of the internal market will involve extensive restructuring, and this has led to fears that already existing differences in development and wealth could be exacerbated as a consequence. However, the project of establishing an internal market can only be successful if it is possible to preserve and further strengthen economic and social cohesion in the Community at the same time.

Therefore the European Council in Brussels adopted resolutions on cohesion in February of 1988 in order to counteract potentially negative effects on less favoured countries and regions that could result from completion of the internal market and to accelerate the catching-up process from the very beginning. In particular, these resolutions provide for doubling the Structural Funds by 1993 and concentrating the use of funds.

The EC Commission then proposed five high-priority objectives for structural policy at Community level, which were adopted by the Council on June 24, 1988 in a Regulation on the "Tasks and Effectiveness of the Structural Funds". These objectives are:

- Objective 1 is "promoting the development and structural adjustment of the regions whose development is lagging behind". These regions are those whose per capita Gross Domestic Product is less than 75% of the Community average. Through this the action taken by the Community is concentrated on a geographical area in which some 20% of the population lives. In concrete terms, this includes the whole of Portugal, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Greece, Southern Italy and large areas of Spain.

- Objective 2 concerns "converting the regions seriously affected by industrial decline" as well as "facilitating the re-structuring of industrial sectors in decline" such as steel, ship-building, coal, and textiles. Declining industrial areas comprise regions with a high rate of unemployment and with major problems of industrial adjustment. These areas are determined through specific criteria such as unemployment rate, trends in employment and industrial employment.

- Objective 3 "combating long-term employment" and Objective 4 "facilitating the occupational integration of young people" affect all Member States. In order to have functional concentration, the number of operational programmes for combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the occupational integration of young people is being restricted.

- Objective 5 deals with rural areas and aims at "speeding up the adjustment of agricultural structures" and "promoting the development of rural areas". The development of rural areas will also be undertaken according to criteria which ensure an appropriate geographical concentration. However, it is up to the Member States to propose the rural regions which they feel are facing the greatest difficulties as the regions for assistance.

When the European Council in Brussels adopted its resolutions in February of this year, it opened a new chapter in Community regional policy. Now that

approximately 30 billion Deutsche Mark have been approved for the Structural Funds annually from 1993 onwards, these funds no longer serve as a mere sop to pacify the less prosperous in the Community. Rather, such funds now play a crucial role in shaping the overall structures of the Community in the future. Their integrative potential is guided by four basic concepts:

1. Concentration of goals and funds in the manner just described. This is intended to preclude a criticism levelled at Community regional policy during the first years of its existence by a number of critics - that Brussels was employing a "watering can" policy.

2. Providing regional assistance within the framework of programmes as a consistent methodical approach and thereby placing limitations on project assistance. This is the main goal of the reform.

In cooperation with the Member States, we are trying to make regional development planning more precise and to create an operational framework for the programmes and projects that the Community supports. Regional development plans will be drawn up for this purpose. Using them as a basis, along with the Member States the Commission will then decide on the individual support networks. These networks will be concerned with the entire range of measures relevant to regional development which the Community supports by providing financing from all the Structural Funds. This is intended to prevent uncoordinated and possibly even contradictory measures from being carried out at the same time on the basis of financing from different sources in the Community.

Such support networks will be established for a period of years, i.e. for periods up to five years. The Community will offer administrative assistance to those regions that lack the administrative prerequisites for the establishment of such networks.

3. Partnership with the Member States and regions. The Commission regards this as an important point, even if it is still greeted with reserve by a number of the Member States.

We have learned from our past experience with regional policy that more attention must be paid to local conditions. Not enough is known about them in Brussels or in the capitals of the Member States.

We therefore want local expertise to play a greater role in discussions. Furthermore, regional policy measures must be discussed with those who are directly responsible for them, which is not a major problem in Germany but is a problem in France or Greece, for example.

In this connection the framework regulations state this is achieved by concerted efforts that are closely coordinated with the Commission, the respective Member State, and the authorities this state designates at national, regional, local or other levels, with all parties as partners in pursuit of a common objective. Such concerted action is referred to as partnership.

This kind of partnership is in keeping with the concept of democratic participation. The manner in which the regional and local levels are included is left to the discretion of the Member States. In accordance with its organizational - to some extent constitutionally prescribed - structures, each Member State will have to determine for itself the best form for participation in regional development planning by the regions or other levels.

An advisory council of regional and local government authorities which the Commission has decided to found also constitutes a step in this direction. The council will be comprised of 42 members, who must exercise a political mandate at regional or local level. They will be appointed by the Commission based on a joint recommendation by three organizations, namely the Assembly of the Regions of Europe, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and the International Union of Local Authorities.

In this connection I can understand very well why the trade unions are demanding direct participation by the social partners. As you know, the final form of participation has not yet been determined. The only comment I wish to make today is that participation by the social partners, no matter what form it takes, will make an important contribution to accomplishing this task.

4. Finally, the principle of additional funding should be observed in connection with the Community's support networks: The aim is to have the Member States use the additional funds provided by the Community for an actual increase in investment instead of reducing their own budget expenditures.

Leaving loans by the European Investment Bank out of consideration, Community participation will take the form of non-repayable grants. Furthermore, it is planned to have varying amounts of support provided by the Community in this connection:

- 65% of total public expenditure in the regions covered by Objective 1,
- 50% in the zones covered by Objective 2, and
- 40% in the remaining cases.

This concludes a broad outline of some important elements of future Community regional policy.

However, it is important to realize that, while an effective contribution by the Community represents a necessary condition for accelerating the catching-up process, it cannot accomplish this task alone.

In addition, it is essential for the economic policy of the countries concerned to continue improving conditions for economic growth. In macroeconomic terms, this means that the rate of investment must increase substantially and that the return on investment must rise further in order to attract more private capital to productive investment despite continued high interest rates. Investment efficiency must be increased considerably - then self-sustaining and lasting growth on a sound economic foundation will be possible in these countries. Naturally the process of catching up will be greatly facilitated for the less favoured countries if it can occur in an economic environment throughout the Community that is as dynamic as possible. A vigorous catching-up process on the part of the less favoured countries also opens up a large amount of additional growth potential to the Community as a whole.

How great are the financing requirements? The expanded structural funds and financing instruments could amount to 4-5% of GDP or more in the case of Greece, Portual, and Ireland. Their share of GDP would be lower for Spain and Italy; concentrated on the poorest regions, however, they would amount to a similar share of the GDP of these regions. Thus the transfer of Community resources would be of a magnitude comparable to the funding currently granted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We also need not hesitate to compare these Community efforts with the Marshall Plan.

If funds are employed as described above, this could lead to economic growth of about 2.5% above average Community growth (measured in terms of per capita GDP) in the four less prosperous Member States (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain), which could make it possible for the states on the periphery to catch up in 10 - 15 years. A similar development already occurred between 1961 and 1973. What was possible then should also be possible tomorrow.

With reference to the social dimension, catching up economically must go hand in hand with catching up in the social sphere. In this connection, the basic social achievements of the more advanced countries should be preserved. For this reason, in addition to regional aspects, the social dimension is of fundamental importance. Completing the social dimension is an independent Community objective which, however, is of particular significance in connection with realization of the internal market.

When Community social policy is being developed, it is necessary to begin by noting the priority accorded to the concept of subsidiary tasks in the Treaties of Rome: According to this concept, the Community is only assigned tasks that can be carried out more effectively as a joint effort than by individual Member States. With reference to the social dimension, this means that the Community will certainly not set up its own comprehensive social security system, replacing the national systems or superimposing itself on them.

In the second place, it should be noted that two important articles have been added to the social policy provisions of the EEC Treaty by means of the Single European Act:

- Article 118a - ensuring the protection of workers at their place of work as an additional task for the Community - which stipulates that the Community should try to encourage "improvements, especially in the working environment, as regards the health and safety of workers..."; and

- Article 118b - the creation of a legal basis for a type of "concerted action" in Europe - according to which the Commission should try to develop a dialogue between management and labour at European level which, if the two sides consider it desirable, can lead to "relations based on agreement".

Based on these considerations, under Vice-President Marin the Commission drew up and recently adopted an action programme on the "Social Dimension of the Internal Market". It can be summarized in four points:

- socio-political measures for the establishment of the internal market,
- socio-political measures for exploiting its advantages,
- supporting measures to counteract negative effects of adjustment and to ease social strains during the transition to a larger market,
- and, finally, development of the dialogue between the social partners in the Community (the so-called "social dialogue").

If we begin by considering the socio-political measures for establishment of the internal market, it can be seen that these deal for the most part with amending existing law in a number of cases in order to define more exactly the applicability and implementation of provisions governing freedom of movement for workers. For example, this includes adapting certain social insurance provisions, specifically where gaps still exist in the area of unemployment insurance, in connection with early retirement, and in the case of civil servants.

Included in the socio-political measures is fulfilling the preconditions established in the above-mentioned Article 118a, which was added to the Treaties of Rome by means of the Single European Act. These concern presentation of proposals to improve safety and health at work. In this connection the Commission submitted seven proposals during the first six months of 1988. Of these, two general proposals for directives are of particular importance: One concerns the implementation of measures to improve safety and health protection for workers at work, and the other deals with provision for workplaces.

Finally, the mutual recognition of university diplomas can be considered part of these measures - in this connection, a positive policy decision was taken on July 22nd of this year when a German President still presided over the Council of Ministers.

Now let us turn to the socio-political measures intended to promote exploitation of the advantages of the great single market. Two kinds of actions are planned:

- First, the introduction of an information system on employment opportunities and working conditions in the various Member States, including the comparability of vocational training qualifications. On this occasion I want to express my appreciation to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) for its work in this field, which has not always been easy. It is precisely the small steps taken outside the limelight which bring Europe closer to the experience of the individual citizen.

- Second, programmes to promote the mobility of workers: Since the mid-1980s two programmes have already achieved considerable success:

ERASMUS: a programme to promote cooperation with regard to universities and research institutes in the Member States, and

COMETT: a programme to promote cooperation between the universities and university institutes of the Member States and companies, especially in the fields of information technology and telecommunications.

Finally, the complex of socio-political measures associated with full realization of the internal market includes supporting measures to combat the negative effects of adjustment.

In this connection, a future-oriented labour market policy that makes it easier for workers to adapt to the requirements of the internal market by means of intensified training, further training, and re-training is of particular importance. At the same time, the programmes directed at reducing unemployment in the problem groups (young people, women, and the long-term unemployed) need to receive greater emphasis.

Furthermore, when industries are no longer competitive incentives will be required to attract new industries that offer secure jobs. In addition to national policies in this area, the social fund for workplace adaptation has been assigned a special task. By 1993 the approximately 5 billion Deutsche Mark presently in the fund will be doubled. They will be used to promote vocational training measures, employment creation, and the occupational reintegration of the unemployed.

These are the comments I wanted to make about the actions and measures planned for the purpose of completing the social dimension. However, they must also be implemented - if possible in agreement with the social partners, who thus have considerable scope for action and bear a great responsibility for shaping the social dimension of life in Europe.

For this reason the "social dialogue" has been established as an important platform in the Community. The dialogue takes place at Community level during regular meetings between representatives of the employers' organizations (Union of Industries of the European Community and European Centre of Public Enterprise) and the trade unions (European Trade Union Confederation).

The Commission provides organizational assistance in this connection. During these informal meetings all major economic and socio-political problems are discussed. The starting point for such discussions is often provided by economic policy papers of the Commission, and sometimes by major internal market policy proposals as well. Certainly no decisions are made at these meetings, but during the almost four years of the "social dialogue" top representatives of management and labour have already been able to come to an understanding on four statements which have led to agreement on important positions regarding technical progress and the programmatic aspects of the internal market. This represents a valuable accomplishment.

The importance of the social dialogue at Community level will increase substantially. This applies both to a strengthened consensus about the major guiding concepts for economic policy and to the development of proposals for solving problems associated with the social dimension of the internal market. The need to regulate certain aspects of labour

relations throughout Europe could lead to framework agreements at European level between the collective bargaining parties in accordance with the EEC Treaty supplemented by Article 118b of the Single European Act (...).

But the social dialogue must be expanded and intensified at national level as well. In border areas the development of closer cooperation between the social partners in the different Member States could serve as an encouraging first step toward developing awareness of the European dimension in relations between the social partners.

All concerned - the Community, the Member States, and the social partners - must make a contribution in order to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the Community. This is worth the effort - for the sake of a more prosperous Europe that provides more jobs and greater social security.

3. Promotion of the dialogue at inter-occupational level on the basis of the Val Duchesse Agreement of March 1987 (Working Group I)

3.1 Summary of the introduction by Günter Köpke, Director of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

Analysis and evaluation of the Val Duchesse Social Dialogue

The Social Dialogue between UNICE and the ETUC was started at the beginning of 1985, on the initiative of President Delors, and further developed on the basis of the political declaration of intentions of 12 November of the same year. This led to the formation of two working groups, dealing respectively with macro-economic policy and new technologies and the social dialogue.

The two opinions issued by the macroeconomics working group were of value in that they served to step up pressure on the governments to pursue a policy geared to fostering economic recovery and job creation.

The preparation of the opinion issued by the "New Technologies and the Social Dialogue" working group was the occasion for a thoroughgoing discussion between the trade unions and the employers on social practices in companies, while it offered the European Commission an opportunity to develop its own endeavours in the field of further education on the basis of this joint statement.

Since the adoption of these joint opinions, however, the limits of a social dialogue between the trade unions and the employers at European level have emerged quite clearly.

In point of fact there exist two opposing standpoints as regards the purpose of this dialogue.

UNICE wishes to preserve the notion that a genuine dialogue is taking place at European level. Yet it considers that this dialogue must under no circumstances give rise to any agreements, or to initiatives by legislate harmonisation on the part of the Commission.

The ETUC, on the other hand, has set itself the goal of achieving European framework agreements, the content of which could be negotiated at the national and/or sectoral level. Furthermore, in the view of the ETUC, the European social dialogue must also serve as a basis for elaborating European legislation and regulations in the social field.

In view of this differing attitude as regards both the content and purpose of the social dialogue, it was hardly surprising that the talks ran into increasing difficulties.

Any evaluation of the Val Duchesse Dialogue as it has been conducted so far is bound to reflect the expectations placed in it at the outset. Measured in terms of the expectations of President Delors and the catalogue of demands of the ETUC, the results must be considered meagre.

With a view to creation of the European social dimension alongside completion of the internal market, and in the light of the "constitutionalisation" of the social dialogue according to the terms of the Single Act. all sides are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the social dialogue must be given new impetus and direction. It is for this reason that President Delors has convened the leading representatives of the two sides to a smal gathering on 12 January 1989, in order to discuss the future direction to be taken.

What has to be made clear on this occasion is that the social dialogue can be neither a substitute for nor an alternative to European legislation and it must not be used in an attempt to pull the wool over people's eyes. The faster the pace or restructuring and readjustment in the major branches of the economy in the context of completion of the internal market, the more important it will be to further the sectoral aspects of the social dialogue. Both sides must, above all, give serious thought to the question of their bargaining mandate. It is not enough for UNICE to declare that it will not negotiate because it is not empowered to negotiate and hence cannot negotiate. If the genuine will to conclude framework agreements in order to solve common problems exists, then appropriate ways of enabling the different organizations to gain the necessary bargaining mandate can also be found. When choosing subjects for negotiation in the future, it would be sensible to restrict oneself increasingly to those questions in which both partners already have real political room for manoeuvre. One such question is the important field of vocational training, and, in particular, further training.

An assessment of the joint Val Duchesse opinion on training and motivation, and information and consultation

The document of 6 March 19871) is a joint opinion. As such, it has no legally binding character and represents at best a sort of moral undertaking on both sides to operate along the lines contained in the joint opinion.

This common opinion consists, as you know, of two parts. The first part deals with training and motivation and the second with information and consultation.

The training and motivation section enumerates a series of positive ideas which the Commission has already used, in the meantime, to develop certain projects and programmes. The second part on information and consultation is restricted, by and large, to a series of observations, without any proposals or actions being developed.

Possibilities for promoting the future social dialogue at inter-occupational level

The promotion of the future social dialogue at inter-occupational level depends on a range of different factors and cannot be viewed in isolation from the conditions actually prevailing at the various levels. This observation would seem to me to be of crucial importance, and the same conclusion emerges unequivocally from the extremely useful descriptive report issued by CEDEFOP on the social dialogue in the European Community Member States in the field of vocational training and continuing education.

The various forms of the social dialogue are to be perceived on four different levels:

- the "geographical" level at which the social dialogue takes place, i.e. plant level, local, regional, national or international level;
- the "educational policy" level at which co-operation takes place or can take place (school, college of further education, technical institute, etc.);
- the "institutional" level at which the dialogue takes place (joint committees, tripartite bodies, etc.);
- the "content" level of the co-operation, ranging from information on consultation and concertation through to co-determination and self-management.

Approaches to vocational training and further training vary quite significantly from one country to the next, which means that opportunities for social dialogue in this sphere also differ to a considerable extent.

Those countries which have a highly developed system of vocational and further training are also those where the social dialogue is the most advanced, i.e. F. R. Germany, Denmark, France and The Netherlands. Yet, even in these countries, problems also arise when it comes to issues of practical implementation.

At national level the governments of all the Member States involve the employers and trade unions in vocational and further training questions in one way or another, e.g. in the preparation of new programmes, official regulations and legislation, i.e. in the setting of standards. But when it comes to putting these standards into practice, a different picture emerges. At this stage there is much less involvement of both sides.

Only in those Member States where strong co-determination legislation - with the corresponding institutions at plant and sectoral level - is in force, are both sides involved in the day-to-day administration, implementation and evaluation of training programmes, in the labour market training and retraining programmes designed to combat unemployment, and in further training measures organised at company level.

The State plays a considerable role in the social dialogue. It sets up special bodies, committees or institutions, with or without participation by the social partners, to implement the legislation in force. In this way it is in a position either to foster or to place spokes in the wheel of the social dialogue.

One must also consider the fact that the legislature in those countries with traditionally stronger centralised administration leaves less room for the social dialogue, in contrast to those countries with a federal structure.

The European Community has in recent years played an increasingly important role in the promotion of the social dialogue. In the past it was involved with the social dialogue predominantly in connection with the transitional problems encountered by young people and women between school or vocational training and working life. In the future, its involvement in the fields of further training, retraining and continuing training will come increasingly to the fore.

In the field of further training, the social dialogue between the employers and unions is even more vital than in that of initial vocational training for young people. But it must be built up on an institutionalised basis if it is to be effective, for the promotion of the social dialogue in such spheres of further and continuing training is of such paramont importance that one must ensure that it is not

restricted to a given occupation but rather is geared to the whole of the labour market and leads to recognised and transferable professional qualifications.

The proposals of the European Commission in the field of further training should be discussed in the framework of the social dialogue at the various levels, both between the umbrella organizations at Community level and between employers' federations and trade unions in the various sectors. This fostering of the social dialogue could represent a significant contribution to economic and social cohesion in the run up to the European internal market in 1992.

The discussion at the next meeting of the Standing Committee on Employment, on the 25th of this month, on the Commission's proposals on continuing vocational training for adults must therefore be continued in the inter-occupational and sectoral social dialogue at Community level. This is necessary if we together wish to raise the standard of continuing training in the EC and ensure convergence of the policies of the Member States.

Experience shows that it is easier to achieve an adequate economic and social response to the processes of restructuring in undertaking, industries and regions if appropriate and well-timed measures to retrain workers are adopted.

The restructuring processes, which have been quite deliberately unleashed by the EC in the context of completion of the internal market, entail for the EC a simultaneous special responsibility in the social sphere. Viewed in this light, the social dialogue at European level must be strengthened and linked up with the existing forms of social dialogue as practised in the different countries.

The extent to which the social dialogue is seen to be promoted at European level will also be one indication of how much credibility is to be attached to the social dimension in the context of completion of the internal market.

1)See Annex

3.2 Summary of the results of Working Group I on "the development of the dialogue at inter-occupational level on the basis of the Val Duchesse agreement of March 1987".

Duilio Silletti, Head of Division at the EC Commission, Directorate-General V

The Workshop on the development of the dialogue at inter-occupational level on the basis of the Val Duchesse agreement of March 1987, structured in accordance with the outline proposed by the excellent introductory report presented by Mr. Köpke, permitted:

- on the one hand, the specification of positions of the social dialogue at inter-occupational level, in general, and on the social dialogue in the field of vocational training, in particular, and
- on the other hand, the presentation of a certain number of proposals with a view to the promotion of this dialogue.

I. General considerations on the social dialogue at inter-occupational level

An initial conclusion of a political nature and of significant importance emerged from the work of the group: the Val Duchesse dialogue, as a contribution at the highest level of the two sides of industry to European integration, is henceforth to be considered an acquired right in the social life of the Community. The Single Act institutionalises the social dialogue, thus creating the legal framework for inter-occupational relations at this level. The positions adopted hitherto bear witness to this acquired right and its importance.

A second conclusion is necessary which stems from this acquired right: in particular with a view to the completion of the Internal Market, it is necessary to examine the modalities which shall permit the continuation and development of the social dialogue at Community level. The participants in the Workshop confirmed the will of both sides of industry to commit themselves in this direction, although their joint intention to do so was not expressed without certain nuances with regard to its immediate and longer-term objectives. The differing opinions on this subject, already specified in Mr. Köpke's introductory report and in the contributions made by the UNICE and ETUC representatives in the course of the morning, were echoed and clarified within the dabate which took place at the Workshop on the more specific theme of the social dialogue at inter-occcupational level in the field of vocational training.

There was general agreement that initial and continuing training constitutes a privileged and priority field within the framework of the inter-occupational dialogue. The example of Portugal was given to demonstrate the fact that vocational training is the least controversial element of the social dialogue and a decisive instrument in its promotion. This holds particularly true for the continuing traing of salaried employees, which, as recalled in the course of the debate, is based at European level on institutional structures such as the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, the European Social Fund Committee and the provisions stipulated in various Community legal acts on the need for close cooperation between the Commission and the social partners in the implementation of Community programmes and actions in the field of vocational education and training.

The importance of the role accorded to this cooperation for the implementation of the Council decision of July 1985 on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States is an example. The forthcoming publication of the results of the work on the occupations of the first three sectors to be examined ("Horeca", motor vehicle repair and construction) provides clear evidence that vocational training, from all these angles, is a privileged field of dialogue and consensus between the two sides of industry at European level, marking their joint contribution to the development of the social dimension of the Community with a degree of success each of the parties can be proud of. Moreover, the social partners, meeting within the Management Board of CEDEFOP, jointly assume responsibility for the Centre's work programme and jointly contribute to provide the common vocational training policy with the scientific bases and technical support it requires.

However, although the social dialogue in the field of vocational training is based on institutionalised structures and a consolidated tradition of cooperation at European level, a certain difference of opinion emerged in the course of the Workshop debate on the objectives to be assigned to the social dialogue in the field of vocational training.

In broad outline and in simplified terms, some speakers expressed the opinion that possible agreements at European level - above and beyond inter-occupational agreements which already exist or are under negotiation at sectoral or national level comprising initiatives and expenditure to be assumed by the firms - might lead to the opening up of a new "counter" at this level, comprising new objections and constraints for the enterprises.

Others, in contrast, were of the opinion that the social dialogue in this field could and should result in European framework agreements as a basis for Community legislation.

Despite these different approaches, the Workshop permitted the condlusion that the deepening of the social dialogue at Community level along the lines of the joint opinion of March 1987 on, e.g. the subject of free access to lifelong trainings, would be likely to promote initiatives of concrete application, in particular in Member States in which inter-occupational agreements are not yet adequately developed in this field.

II.Proposals with a view to the promotion of the inter-occupational social dialogue at European level in the field of vocational training

In any case, a number of speakers repeatedly underlined the need to identify points on which it might be relatively easy to reach an agreement between the two sides of industry in order to move from the phase of dialogue to the phase of negotiation.

It was proposed that this common ground should be sought on subjects such as training to assist the SME's, more exposed to the consequences of technological change than large companies or multinationals.

Another point identified on which the social dialogue could advance more easily was the training of certain occupational groups which could produce a greater degree of mobility in the framework of the Single European Market; the social partners could jointly develop appropriate training modules and implement pilot projects in this field.

On the subject of the forward management of employment and training requirements, the debate showed that there is not an unanimous consensus on the need for social dialogue in this field. Some of the participants maintained that the implementation of such forward projection initiatives, difficult enough at national level, would be even more so at Community level, and commented that it was even possible to question the utility of such an exercise at this leve

Nevertheless, in the light in particular of structural economic change and the development of occupations, the majority of the speakers were in favour of a Community instrument to observe occupations and to forecast training requirements if the necessary adjustments were to be proposed in due time; such an instrument was considered an indispensable support for any active employment, guidance and vocational training policy.

A number of specific proposals were put forward:

a. It would be appropriate to envisage a technical or financial Community incentive for the implementation of inter-occupational or sectoral agreements at European level, providing a concrete follow-up to the work on the comparability of vocational training qualifications in terms of progressing from the stage of comparability to that of the recognition of qualifications.

b. More generally, it was proposed that the Community should make a contribution to the implementation of agreements between both sides of industry on vocational training insofar as the content of these agreements corresponds to preestablished Community objectives and criteria.

c. In the context of this general proposal, a specific proposal was put forward on the avdisibility of Community support for any sectoral agreement between the social partners aimed at the establishment of studies and research on forward employment management.

d. As far as the field of employment is concerned, the ETUC put forward the idea of the establishment of a European employment office, structured on a tripartite basis, with the objective of promoting the mobility of workers throughout the Europe without Frontiers of tomorrow.

e. Finally, with implicit reference to both a conclusion by CEDEFOP in its summary report on the role of both sides of industry in initial and continuing vocational training, the members of the Workshop emphasised that a more advanced level of social dialogue can be observed in Member States with a more developed vocational training system. In the light of this interdependence, one proposal would seem to emerge from the seminar documents and debates: the need to encourage as a priority any action aimed at the development of both vocational training systems and the social dialogue in Member States and priority regions in the light of the objectives of economic and social cohesion recalled by Mr. Schmidhuber in his opening speech to the symposium.

4. Development of the social dialogue at sectoral level (Working Group II)

4.1 Introduction by Enrique Retuerto de la Torre, Deputy Director of CEDEFOP

At a time when we can observe a rise in the "significance" of the role of the enterprise vis-à-vis that of public bodies as far as interventions in the labour market are concerned, we can see that vocational training is becoming more and more an autonomous aspect of vocational relationship.

However, after leaving the level of abstraction and beginning to study the different aspects of real business organisation models (including democracy at the work place), the current level and rhythm of automation in the major enterprises in each sector, and the influence of the sectoral organizations of the two partners (active membership being a decisive factor), a schematic description of working relationships (specifically in the field of continuing training) that does not focus on the individual economic sectors, may be of no use to those concerned.

By verifying a situation first at national and then local levels and comparing framework agreements with those concluded within the sectors, the degree of transparency will increase; not only in view of the dimensions of the framework within which agreements are situated, but also and above all because in most countries the tradition as regards the social dialogue by sector or by field of activity is greater, furthermore, it is also true that the interlocutors in the various fields of activity know from close experience the problems linked with lack of qualifications and the current needs for retraining.

Accordingly, if it is intended to find more or less universal models which have been put to the practical test in this context of an autonomous concertation for vocational training, the moment has not yet arrived. On the basis of available descriptive reports, however, it is possible to draw a nomber of initial conclusions:

The first point to be stressed is that of the more frequent coincidence of practical procedures, sector by sector as existing at national level rather than amongst the sectors within each Member State. The construction/building industry is still a sector affected much more strongly by the state of the economy and the labour market situation, whilst the metal industry and the banking sector have always benefited from their competence as regards the products they are required to provide.

A second conclusion is that despite the lack of framework agreements for vocational training and in view of the existing competition on the market, above all as a result of the introduction of information technologies, the unions are drawing greater attention in the dialogue to the problems of quality and work organisation; accordingly the discussion is centred on training issues.

The third point of these studies was concerned with different aspects of management and administration, in particular the financing of training (especially continuing training) as well as work release provisions for training and continuing training. Here, as with other aspects of the problem, the degree of obligation imposed by the agreements is very important and is linked at the same time with the character of the various unions. Nevertheless, whilst there are many agreements concerned with initial training, the enterprises normally consider continuing training to be their own responsibility, or, if not dependent on the enterprises, they consider it to be a matter which should be regulated by public authorities or self-monitored.

Concerning the establishment practise in the different Member States as regards the implementation of common mechanisms for action, the national reports and synthesis reports concerned with these aspects are sufficiently devoted to descriptions of numerous "joint committees", "sectoral committees" and even training centres managed, on a more or less joint basis, by the two social partners. It is not expedient here to present comments which would be a mere repitition of what has already been written.

Finally, with the presentation of numerous examples in the national dossiers, it is difficult to isolate the various experiences and developments at sectoral level from those occuring at national or enterprise level. This means that the sectoral organisations normally react to initiatives and measures taken at a more general level. However it should not be forgotten that at the same time awareness of the fundamental importance of vocational training is growing in all quarters (if only because of "market considerations" and that this is already reflected in the increase in the number of national initiatives, but also sectoral initiatives, coordinated by those responsible for labour management relations.

4.2 Summary of the results of Working Group II on development of the social dialogue at sectoral level

Peter Grootings, CEDEFOP

1. Approximately 30 participants took part in the workshop. The introduction was given by Mr. Retuerto de la Torre, Deputy Director of CEDEFOP. Mr. Retuerto stressed that there are many differences between the countries but that these very differences also provide the opportunity to make comparisons, to learn from other solutions. After a discussion of some of these existing differences at sectoral level between the EEC countries he concluded that nevertheless the general trend goes towards an increased interest in vocational training issues also at the sectoral level, even if it is difficult to uncouple from similar developments both at enterprise and national level. The need for development of social dialogue on vocational training in order to be able to cope with problems of the near future obviously has to be extended to the sectoral level as well. The social dialogue here should be intensified and at the same time be integrated in the social dialogue at other levels. It is precisely here that one can find major differences, that is in the degree to which sectoral dialogue is in fact related to social dialogue on vocational training issues at other levels.

2. In the discussion that followed it was asked why the concept of social dialogue tends to be restricted to employers, unions and the state and why other social actors such as consumers or teachers should not be included. At any rate to speak about "the two sides" would be misleading it was argued. One participant questioned whether the sectoral level would be important at all for a discussion on social dialogue on matters of vocational training in view of the fact that training is of decisive importance in the competition between firms. The same participant also asked about the role played by the trade unions in this connection. Most of the other participants however strongly disagreed with this position. But with it the ground was laid for an interesting discussion.

3. After a short presentation of existing forms of social dialogue in a number of sectors in different countries the workshop then concentrated on the actual aims, i.e. possibilities, forms and limitations of social dialogue concerning (initial and continuous) vocational training at sectoral level. Also some discussion took place about the implications of the internal market, especially in terms of sectoral dialogue on the european level.

4. In various countries there is already some experience with joint involvement of social partners on vocational training issues. The workshop participants have been informed about the situation in the building industry in Denmark, Ireland, UK and Germany where the dialogue is organised either in the framework of special committees or takes place during collective bargaining. Other examples were given, such as the steel industry in the UK, the metal industry in Germany, and various sectoral level negotiations in the Netherlands.

On the European level the examples are more scarce. Although the branch organizations meet regularly in Brussels, issues of vocational training have not yet become widely discussed at this level. The European trade organizations, where agreement has just been reached about a joint memorandum on vocational training, were mentioned as an exception. These examples given are interesting and important. At the same time they give rise to a number of questions, such as:

- why in other sectors in the countries of the EEC no such thing as social dialogue has developed as yet, and
- why there is so little development at the European level and beyond national borders between the branch organizations?

These two questions have not been discussed as such but their formulation makes it possible to regroup a series of different interventions. They all in fact pointed at the need for a careful analysis of the very conditions that exist at sectoral level for the development of social dialogue on vocational training. One has to seriously consider what one can expect from a dialogue at this level as compared with dialogue on other levels. Moreover, from the existing experiences one can already learn something as to the limitations of social dialogue at sectoral level and the problems that occur when such a dialogue does in fact exist. With respect to this last point for example, a representative from the German Metal Union argued that their experiences now show that some form of assitance or regulation by the state remains necessary. In other words, social dialogue at sectoral level can only be part of an overall system of social dialogue which is at the same time also not completely restricted to "the two sides of industry".

5. What about 1992 and the perspective of the internal market? There was general agreement about the fact that indeed one can learn much from experiences made by and in other countries. It was stressed however that this is only possible after careful analysing such experiences. No simple copying of success stories would be possible. Many participants strongly suggested that both the

Commission and CEDEFOP would have an important role to play in such an exchange and comparative analysis of experiences. One important factor that always has to be taken into account is the existence of fundamental differences in the vocational training systems among the countries, also at sectoral level. The same is true, as a matter of fact for sectoral occupational and labour market structures. It was pointed out however that at this point a European sectoral social dialogue may contribute substantially to an understanding of or even mastering of such differences. The development of a European information system on vocational training qualifications and certificates would be quite useful. The development of such an instrument was welcomed and preferred much more rather than the introduction of some kind of a European Certificate which has also been under discussion. It was suggested that the Commission and CEDEFOP should continue to work in this direction with their ongoing work on comparability of vocational training qualifications. It was stressed that this work in which national tripartite delegations from all Member States are involved in an attempt to agree on joint definitions for skilled workers occupations in particular sectors is actually the most important example of social dialogue at the European level in view of the year 1992. Some participants suggested that after the occupational profiles CEDEFOP should also develop overviews of the corresponding training or qualification modules. Such an overview, if available to all the countries would enable the social partners to discuss the possibility of agreemeent at a higher level in case of differences in contents of qualifications. Such a development, it was added would not only contribute toward creating possibilities for mobility but would also help to further develop national vocational training systems in a progressive way towards higher levels of quality.

6. It would be wrong, as one participant from one of the trade unions rightly stressed, to fall into a social dialogue euphoria. And it would be equally wrong to suggest that the mere existence of a European information system would immediately solve all the problems. Where social dialogue exists at present it has been the result of previous struggles and even the dialogue is not free of conflicts. Vocational training is about competences and about their value in society. It is therefore not a simple technical issue but a very social one and related to different social interests. Its growing importance for the future of Europe and all its inhabitants however makes it extremely important and necessary to search for optimal ways of regulating those differing interests and the potential conflicts that are undoubtedly connected with them. Also on the sectoral level. But not only here.

5. The role of the two sides of industry at the regional level (Working Group III)

5.1 Summary of the paper by Paolo Garonna, Professor at the University of Padua

The importance of the regional level for training policies and the social dialogue

In many countries the regional level has a vital role to play in planning managing and assessing the effectiveness of training policies. The regional dimension is fundamental in the management of the labour market flows, and therefore in determining the skill requirements of the labour force, the demand for upgrading the quality of the human capital, and for intervening in the promotion and provision of an adequate training supply.

In recent times the regional dimension has in general become more important both for training and for the interaction of the social partners. In fact, on one side,

- the employment crisis, particularly youth unemployment and the displacement of adult labour in areas of desindustrialization, has emphasized the need for the finalization of training efforts towards the needs of specific, and therefore regional or local, labour markets;

- vis-à-vis the difficulties of traditionally centralized and essentially macroeconomic-employment policies, the local economics have shown initiative and energy in providing a regional response to the employment and development crisis: these efforts have included training and continuing training measures and innovations in training methods.

On the other side, a more dynamic context for industrial relations has developed at the regional level,

- more pragmatic and collaboratives attitudes at the regional level have sometimes provided an outlet to the deepening and sharpening of industrial conflict at the national level along ideological and political contrasts;

- after the uncertainties and setbacks of attempts at incomes policy in many countries, a tendency has emerged to strenghten bargaining at decentralized level;

- given the employment crisis, the social partners have asked, and have been called upon, to play a greater role in labour market management, that, as we said above, is particularly important at the local level.

The regional dimension of greater European integration beginning in 1992

In the construction of Europe, thus far the regions have tended to be a restraining factor. Regional unbalances and specificities have justified the delays and the reluctance to complete the unification of the market, to make progress in the harmonization of structural and institutional policies, including education and training, and to induce cohesion in monetary and fiscal policies and stability in exchange rates.

The perspective of 1992 is changing this approach. The European policies have to find and promote in the regions of the Community new opportunities for greater and more stable integration. There is now a growing awareness that the realization of the single market will not be effective and beneficial, or even will not be possible, if it is not accompanied by renewed efforts in structural policies affecting the regional economies and progress in the social dialogue.

Unfortunately, not always this awareness has produced adequate responses at the European policy level. The main link, that is missing, is that between the reform of structural policies and the instruments for macroeconomic cooperation. The ingenious idea implicit in the proposal of an "ECU for the unemployment" by Tarantelli, i.e. that some kind of an automatic mechanism linking European monetary policy with support for week regions would have to be established, has not been carried further. Structural policies therefore, including training policies, however expensive they might be, risk of being merely remedial in relation to the failures of macroeconomic cooperation.

But the reform of the structural funds is providing both risks and opportunities to be carefully considered and discussed in the session:

- the focus on regional unbalances is becoming greater in the light of the concentration of the European structural effort towards a limited number of well specified objectives;

- regional programmes, designed with the involvement of the social partners, following a coherent integrated approach, should also benefit the local economies and the dialogue at the local level;

- the risk of the integrated approach is that the employment objective becomes subordinated to other development needs, and that the priority for the improvement of the labour market loses momentum;

- a related risk is that the participation of the two sides of industry to the procedures for planning, managing and evaluating the use of Community resources becomes less intense, and that the emphasis on large programmes marginalizes the requirements of the local and regional labour markets.

5.2 Summary of the results of Working Group III by Werner Löw, Member of the Section for Social Questions of the EC Economic and Social Committee

The discussion of the theses presented by Paolo Garonna confirmed the need to intensify the "global approach" in connection with various policies, both in the different regions of the Community and at the European level. An integrated global policy is required for training, employment, and correspondingly harmonized economic and structural policy in the regions.

The discussion has shown that structures may not always be available for this purpose, but that better results can be achieved by fuller exploitation of the possibilities offered by the dialogue between the social partners and public authorities.

Some measures to improve cooperation at regional level were discussed:

- Collective bargaining between companies and trade unions or their representatives in the enterprises plays an important role in this connection. New training places can be created or maintained by means of such negotiations. Continuing training provisions can be developed, as well as special support programmes in the case of impending dismissals. It was emphasized in this connection that such collective bargaining should also be concerned with wages and working conditions acceptable to both sides so that companies offer training places for training that enough young people want to enter.

- Participation by the social partners in the plans and policies of the regional authorities also played an important role in the discussion. It was felt that intensified cooperation should be sought - in order to make better use of universally scarce resources on the one hand, and on the other hand in order to ensure that the measures have practical value and are closely tailored to the needs of those concerned. Local labour market administrations ought to be included in this dialogue as well. Above all in Member States where small-scale company structures predominate, this could lead to useful initiatives, e.g. supra-company training centres for training and continuing training and to making better use of available capacity, also of supra-regional capacity, if appropriate. Since technical change is so rapid, it was emphasized that such cooperation also contributes to improving the quality of training.

- In addition, the social partners could develop initiatives for joint training and continuing training programmes in the regions. A number of examples from different regions and industries in the Community were given which served to illustrate that cooperation between companies, trade unions, and government and labour market authorities at regional level has been responsible for new initiatives to establish training and continuing training centres for which adequate financing was secured.

- In this connection it was again stressed that a global approach must receive greater emphasis in the future and that considerably better coordination is required within the regions for measures involving training, the labour market, structural policy, and establishment of industries. Such an integrated policy can make it more attractive to locate industry in disadvantaged regions. Here the social partners play an important role in providing for contacts and communication.

- With regard to this subject, a number of comments were made about the problems associated with the exodus of labour from disadvantaged regions. There was agreement during the first part of the discussion that the labour mobility achieved by means of training and further training should not serve as an excuse for lack of structural policy and failure to attract industry. Improved and intensified training in these regions should not lead to a further drain on their labour resources as the sole result. In the past there have been cases where underdeveloped or structurally underdiversified regions created good training opportunities for the purpose of attracting new industry, but their efforts led to a different result: Due to a lack of simultaneous and timely structural measures, industries were not established in these regions, and the newly trained labour force then migrated elsewhere. In other words, such approaches - which are both expensive and imaginative - did not bring progress.

Even though no new approaches to solving this problem emerged from the discussion at the workshop, it was certainly clear to the participants that something must be done to eliminate this vicious circle.

- The role of the social partners in carrying out the EC's own measures at regional level was also discussed. In the past it has happened that such EC programmes are coordinated at Community level with the social partners, but that they are then implemented by the respective authorities at regional or local level with practically no larger-scale participation by the social partners. The group was of the opinion that Community programmes could be more efficient if there were greater involvement on the part of employers' and trade union organizations, that such programmes could be better adapted to local needs, and that coordination with structural and economic programmes could be achieved. This could ultimately lead to better use of financial resources. It was pointed out that the regions often compete with each other for Community funds and that to some extent measures are not always carried out where they are really needed, but rather where authorities react faster or more adeptly. Then such competition no longer results in provision of training where it is necessary, but rather benefits other places.

- The social partners are charged with a special task in border areas. A number of examples discussed in the working group demonstrate that transnational cooperation involving the social partners, the public authorities, and regional labour market administrations has been exceptionally successful in many cases and has led to pronounced improvements in the training and employment structures of the respective regions. In this connection examples of cooperation between Luxemburg, Belgium, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany in the Mosel area, between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands on the Lower Rhine, as well as between Belgium, France, and Italy with regard to certain branches of industry were cited. Here the training and continuing training capacity available in a single region was used transnationally in a way that benefited all neighbouring regions. There was discussion of the formal problems (bureaucratic obstacles, laws, and training regulations) that make it impossible to achieve such cooperation in theory. Despite this, in practice such cooperation made it possible to find unbureaucratic and locally suitable solutions that extended across borders.

The question of how Community institutions and CEDEFOP could work more closely with the EC citizens concerned played an important role in the discussion. In the opinion of the working group, it is the task of CEDEFOP to gather still more experience in this area and to analyse and disseminate it, last but not least by means of conferences like the present one. CEDEFOP has also been assigned an important role in connection with solving the problems posed by mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates, and vocational qualifications. In this connection, it was clear to the participants that the experience gained thus far with a limited number of occupations has shown it is difficult to harmonize training profiles, but that it is possible to arrive at practical approaches through mutual acceptance of the national standards. The Commission was called upon to press ahead with the work more intensively than in the past, above all in this area. Vis-a-vis the Commission the desire was also expressed that greater coordination of the kind recommended above be practiced with regard to the various Community funds and utilization of resources. In this connection, participation by the social partners should increase, not only at Community level, but above all at the local level. The desire for a fairer distribution of funds was also expressed, i.e. that they should be aimed more selectively at the regions requiring them. The Commission was asked to devote particular attention to transnational cooperation and to ensure that bureaucratic obstacles (some of which violate agreements already reached) are eliminated in this area. The exchange of trainees and trainers ought to be improved in this connection.

In conclusion, it was re-emphasized that the social dialogue can help promote higher occupational qualifications at regional level as well and could lead to improvements in labour market structures.

6. Social dialogue at company level (Working Group IV)

6.1 Summary of the introduction by Alain d'Iribane, Director of Research, CNRS (National Centre for scientific research)

The enterprise, as the choice of topics for this colloquium indicates, is only one forum for the social dialogue, one which enjoys a variety of privileges depending on the country, period and traditions in the respective country, region, or sector of activity ... In the same way, training is only one element in this dialogue which may take in numerous other subjects: safety, conditions, work organization, remuneration ...

The in-company social dialogue on initial and continuing training is merely a component in a much larger complex, that of industrial relations. The social dialogue must be constantly resituated within and constantly adjusted in line with this overall context. Failing this, it cannot be evaluated either in economic or social terms.

In the last few years, public authorities and also employers' professional organizations have sought to give enterprises an increased, even privileged role in the search for a social dialogue which itself has been activated or reactivated. This situation can be interpreted as the ideological rebirth of the enterprise. It is reassuming its place amongst the "respectable" institutions that are regaining a leadership function, whether this be economic, associated with employment policy, or social. This amounts to a certain reversal of a situation which had subjected enterprises to more or less close surveillance in order to defend general interests.

This trend has been very clear in France since the beginning of the 1980s. It has also become apparent in other European countries, too, with slogans such as "less state and more free enterprise", and in the reaffirmed need to maintain civil society in the face of growing tension amongst social groups provoked by the economic crisis and the adjustment mechanisms considered necessary to maintain competitive ability. Thus, the social dialogue is seen as a suitable tool to reduce tension and to settle conflicts in the face of widely divergent interests.

In the same way, increased status is being enjoyed by vocational training as a management tool and as a support for negotiations between social parties. This is particularly true of continuing training, which offers a sufficiently fresh field of activity for industrial relations that is not already marked by traditional antagonisms. Here, there seem to be many opportunities for dialogue as they themselves are moving from short-term to mid-term management, a factor which helps to close the gap between the viewpoints of the social partners.

Depending on the circumstances, however, vocational training sacrifices much of its autonomy for the sake of integration into issues which are felt to be of more economic and social importance: occupational and social integration of young people, updating technologies and changes in work organization, cuts in companies work force and loss of jobs ... Thus vocational training programmes again run the risk of being broken down in conjunction with educational policies, economic policies, regional development policies, and employment policies without there always being sufficient coherence, which leads to large-scale waste.

Furthermore, the two-fold perspective of decentralized entrepreneurial efforts to achieve coherence and a social dialogue nearer to the work venues, must perforce appear seductive to employees whose education level is steadily increasing with each new generation. Here, they see an opportunity in appropriate circumstances to voice their demands and hopes which they feel are not taken into account in more traditional forms of social reflection. This leads quite naturally to prospects of "direct democracy at the place of work" (in the workshops and service units) by means of what is called participation in France.

Such prospects do, however, raise serious problems for workers trade unions who see this as posing a serious threat to the degree of unionization. These fears are founded when one examines the proportion of non-trade union members in the relevant units in the enterprise as soon as this presence has been authorized in the relevant legislation. This trend seems to be becoming clearer and clearer with the passage of time and professional elections. More fundamentally, beyond the challenge to their existence, the workers trade unions fear that this social coherence, which they have been working towards precisely at this level, will be destroyed.

In fact, when the social dialogue in the enterprise leads to agreements, the role devolved to the enterprise in this respect gives it a new position in the "production of rules", in this case of labour

legislation. By this indirect toute, the enterprise, as the place where economic management actually occurs and that therefore funtions in a unique way, becomes an organ and source of professional legislation which is likely to enter into conflict with other traditional sources of labour legislation and training, the objective of which is the opposite, i.e. to regulate the relations between enterprises and society in a uniform manner. In opposing other sources of more general legal rules, the enterprise can only ever provide special agreements and thus create inequalities. The conflicts between the sources of legislation may be even stronger when they lead to conflicts in legitimacy: the legitimacy of the firm agreement as the "direct expression of the workers" at their places of work.

This is a classical industrial relations problem which takes on a new sharpness in view of the far-reaching change currently taking place in Europe. It raises the problem of "decentralized" officials in the firms, their capacity for a dialogue, the tools and the bodies at their disposal in this sphere. It raises above all the problem of the general architecture of the industrial relations system in each country with its history and dynamism. In practice, promoting the social dialogue in the enterprise must not lead to a weakening of the general frameworks which produce legal regulations.

It seems indisputable that Community bodies have an important role to play in this field, that the enterprise and vocational training provide sound supports for a social dialogue which is to be encouraged. But the one just as the other cannot take on this function outside a larger concept which bears in mind the divergent interests of those involved and the contradictions which exist between the levels and forms associated with the achievement of social balance. Therefore the problem facing the EEC is to encourage the Member States to begin seeking or to continue with the search for suitably coordinated institutional forms of dialogue and equalization in order to promote economic and social progress and to minimize the development of inverse mechanisms which, by means of a more or less triumphant liberal offensive, would jeopardize social achievements and forms of collective action.

Against this background, the EEC must not look for formal unification but, on the contrary, functional unification linked to precise goals which will take account of the existing situations in each country. Such an orientation implies experimental action based on in-depth analyses in which decentralized officials will play a major role and the enterprise will become a venue for social innovation. Such a path requires much vigilance on the part of the legislators and a balanced aptitude for negotiation between the social partners.

6.2 Summary of the results of Working Group IV by Herbert Nierhaus, Member of the Section for Social Questions of the EC Economic and Social Committee

The to some extent provocative ideas in Mr. d'Iribarne's contribution provided a good foundation for the discussion that followed. In particular, he made the following observations:

- Due to the social dialogue now taking place, companies have come to play a more important - even privileged - role, and their significance has increased.

- At the same time, more importance is also being attached to vocational training as an essential basis of this social dialogue, and it is being treated with greater respect.

- There is a growing tendency to view the contents and impact of vocational training from other perspectives such as social integration, the consequences of technological change, labour organization, or work force reduction, which can result in a considerable loss of autonomy for such training.

- Due to promotion of the social dialogue - also on the job - workers are experiencing a degree of emancipation, which leads to a form of "direct democracy at the place of work".

- As a consequence, there is a danger that the trade unions will become less significant and not be consulted in connection with solving serious problems in the enterprises.

- These and other effects of the social dialogue in companies jeopardize the entire structure of relations between employers and workers and their respective organizations that has existed thus far at the supra-company level, which can lead to great difficulties and must therefore be prevented.

- As a consequence, the European Community has the task of continuing and intensifying coordinated forms of dialogue at the institutional level. In this connection, the Community should not aim at achieving formal uniformity, but rather must work to achieve precisely defined objectives that are suited to conditions in the individual countries.

Before opening the lively discussion that followed this presentation, the chair of the working group, Mrs. Hurup Grove, reminded the participants to keep the following points in mind:

- that continuing training cannot create new jobs, but at best preserves existing workplaces and makes it easier to attract new ones,

- that participation in continuing training requires sufficient motivation,

and

- that it is also the task of the company to define training and qualification requirements in connection with the social dialogue.

The following main points emerged from the discussion:

a. To an increasing extent, the importance of the enterprise in connection with successful continuing training is growing as a result of the social dialogue, because such dialogue can always be practice-oriented and flexible with regard to objectives. However, it is necessary to recognize that small companies are in danger of being excluded from this social dialogue, since opportunities for discussion are not sufficiently institutionalized in their case.

Those participating in the discussion agreed that continuing training is the aspect of the social dialogue which contains the least potential for conflict.

It was stressed that the young people who would be conducting this social dialogue in the companies in the future must also be sufficiently qualified and prepared to do so.

In this connection the suspicion was expressed that the development of the social dialogue frequently involved theoretical declamation since, precisely with regard to issues of educational policy, the Community appeared to reach agreement with the national governments without consulting the social parties, which certainly could not be characterized as "social dialogue".

b. Frequently the demand was voiced that the subject matter of training to improve qualifications should not be tied too closely to immediate in-company applications. Rather, a certain degree of flexibility should be incorporated for the sake of those participating in continuing training, and some freedom of choice should also be permitted in connection with this. The participants felt it was reasonable to take an approach that makes allowance for the interests of both sides - the company and also the worker - with regard to participation in continuing training.

There was criticism of the lack of mobility across borders that currently prevails in the Community, especially in more highly qualified occupations. It was felt that in the future intensified participation in continuing training could have a positive influence on such mobility.

With regard to the requirements of the 1992 internal market, suitable standardization of the subject matter taught in continuing training was identified as another important task of the social dialogue.

c. Continuing training and efforts to improve qualifications - so it was stated - can only be successful if potential participants are also adequately motivated. In general, it is precisely the groups of workers in greatest need of additional qualifications who do not participate in continuing training measures offered by companies. Rather, those workers who already have a higher level of education and qualification are the ones who take advantage of such offerings.

According to the participants, strengthening motivation to participate in continuing vocational training must also include incentives to encourage participation in qualification measures. This was considered an important task for the social dialogue in companies.

d. One main point of discussion concerned the special needs of small and medium-sized enterprises with regard to qualification measures. It was observed that precisely small and medium-sized companies will be more affected than many sectors of large-scale industry by the structural changes resulting from the realization of the internal market by 1992. Therefore continuing training would be a very important instrument for small and medium-sized companies to employ in order to solve the additional problems confronting them. However, in connection with conducting the social dialogue on continuing training it was considered necessary to ensure that overly restrictive practices (e.g. making admission requirements more difficult, inappropriate selection procedures, financial burdens) are avoided.

e. With regard to opportunities for participation by the social parties in the social dialogue on continuing training, it was observed that

- such opportunities vary greatly from country to country and are extensively regulated in some countries, while in others they are not organized at all and that

- therefore opportunities for participation are not necessarily transferable in all cases.

At the same time some of those participating in the discussion cautioned against concluding that divi-

sions between the European trade unions could result in this connection (among other things, with regard to co-determination issues).

f. During the discussion about the Commission's role in connection with the social dialogue at company level it was noted that the Commission has already undertaken a number of activities in the area of continuing training and intends to introduce more. There was an emphatic call for constant monitoring of past - and all future - Commission measures to determine what has been accomplished and what is therefore still required for their realization, and furthermore it was demanded that this area of Commission activity be accorded even greater importance than in the past.

7. Annex

7.1 March 1987 Agreement (Val Duchesse)

Joint opinion of the Working Pary on "social dialogue and the new technologies" concerning training and motivation and information and consultation

Brussels, 6 March 1987

Following the meeting held on 12.11.1985 between representatives of the employers' organizations affiliated to UNICE and CEEP and representatives of the trade union organizations affiliated to the ETUC, the Commission convened a Working Party on "social dialogue and the new technologies", which subsequently decided to turn its attention to specific topics including. (A) Training and motivation, and (B) Information and consultation.

(A) Training and motivation

The participants in this group issued the following joint opinion concerning the part of their work related to training and motivation:

1. They took the view that the process of introducing new technologies would be economically more viable and socially more acceptable if accompanied, amongst other things, by effice training and greater motivation for both workers and managerial staff, factors which, in their view, constitute a genuine investment.

To this end, every member of the staff of the firm, at all levels of responsibility, should be encouraged to make the necessary efforts at adaptation and training, also through personal commitment.

2. They also stressed that vocational training - comprising basic training, in-service training and retraining - should be able to satisfy the demands of workers, firms, the economy in general and of the internal market in particular. From this point of view and in the spirit of this opinion, the work carried out by the Commission and by CEDEFOP on the development of training systems and their comparability needs the active support of both sides of industry and of the Governments. A system for the mutual recognition of qualifications should be rapidly introduced at European level.

3. They point out that responsibility for basic training, whether provided by the education systems or the basic training systems, lies with the public authorities.1 However, in order to ensure greater consistency between training and the requirements of the economy and of firms and workers, the authorities should consult and involve the social partners more than they do at present.

4. With a view to the adaptation of the training systems, they consider that the social partners must actively contribute towards the transition of young people from school to working life, more particularly by developing the Community programme of pilot projects. In this context, they stress the need to reorganize the education systems so as to make them more efficient - from basic training to training in advanced skills - and promote greater versatility and the acquisition of basic skills required for the transition of young people to adult working life. Priority should be attached to the development of a continuous process of guidance and counselling as well as to the training of trainers and to the methods of training needed in order to meet these requirements.

5. They also consider that in-service training should enable employees to adapt swiftly and continuously to structural changes in the firm, and that the costs of such training should be borne primarily by the firm itself. Information and consultation of the workforce or, depending on national practice, of its representatives, on training programmes carried out by the undertaking, would help to increase employees' motivation by also improving their understanding of the changes facing the firm.2

6. They stress that retraining measures must enable employees to find work or another job - as set out in paragraph 2 above - either in the same firm or elsewhere. It will, in principle, be the firm within which the worker continues to be employed with different skills which will have to bear the cost of these measures. However, at the same time, they emphasized that the economic and social value of a retraining policy implies that public vocational training bodies should play a part so as to ensure a proper distribution of the costs, and a better utilization of resources. By contrast, the burden of retraining workers who no longer continue to be employed by the original firm will have to be borne by the public authorities or the firm which recruits them.

7. They also took the view that in-service training and retraining would be more effective if backed up by a policy designed to improve the forecasting of

trends as regards skills and employment, particularly at regional and local level, so as to promote convergence between the respective aims of training and employment.

8. As regards the implementation of a vocational training policy for small and medium-sized enterprises, a more detailled study should be made of the ways and means by which the specific charateristics of these undertakings could be accomodated.

9. Special attention should be devoted to unskilled first-job seekers, particularly as concerns people under 25 years of age and women.

(B) Information and consultation

Acknowledging the need to master and manage the changes resulting from the process of industrial transformation now in progress, so as to make them effective and socially acceptable, the members of the Working Party issued the following joint opinion on that part of their work which relates to information and consultation in connection with the introduction of new technologies in firms.

1. To clarify what follows, "information and consultation" must be understood as applying to workers and/or their representatives, in accordance with the laws, collective agreements and practices in force in the countries of the Community.

2. The participants recognized the need to make use of the economic and social potential offered by technological innovation in order to enhance the competitiveness of European firms and strengthen econimic growth, thus creating one of the necessary conditions for better employment and, taking particular account of progress in the field of ergonomics, for improved working conditions.

3. The participants stress the need to motivate the staff at all levels of responsibility in firms and to develop their aptitude to change, amongst other ways by means of good information and consultation practices. They consider that such motivation will be all the higher if all the staff are in aposition to understand the economic and social need for structural and technological change and the potential which such change offers to firms and to the workforce.

4. The participants note that, in most countries of the Community and also in many industrial sectors, there exist various forms of information and consultation procedures and negotiating practices. Whilst accepting the diversity of the existing procedures, they consider that best use should be made of the existing procedures.

5. Both sides take the view that, when technological changes which imply major consequences for the workforce are introduced in the firm, workers and/or their representatives should be informed and consulted in accordance with the laws, agreements and practices in force in the Community countries. This information and consultation must be timely.

In this context:

(i) information means the action of providing the workers and/or their representatives, at the level concerned, with relevant details of such changes, so as to enlighten them as to the firm's choices and the implications for the workforce.

(ii) consultation of the workers and/or their representatives, at the level concerned, means the action of gathering opinions and possible suggestions concerning the implications of such changes for the firm's workforce, more particularly as regards the effects on their employment and their working conditions.

6. Both sides consider that information and consultation may, in certain circumstances, require an obligation to observe secrecy or confidentiality in order to prevent any damage to the firm.

The conditions relating to such confidentiality and the power to withhold the secret or confidential information, as also the need to provide timely information concerning major changes in the terms of employment and working conditions of the staff concerned fall within the scope of the laws, agreements and practices in force in the countries of the Community.

7. Both sides state that information and consultation must facilitate and should not impede the introduction of new technology, the final decisions being exclusively the responsibility of the employer or of the decision-making bodies of the firm. It is understood that this prerogative does not exclude the possibility of negotiation where the parties take a decision to that effect.

8. In order to improve understanding of the new technologies, promote the acquisition of new skills and enhance adaptability, both sides express the wish that appropriate training for both employers and workers be developed.

In this connection, both sides express the wish that the Commission develop ways and means of contributing to this process.

9. Despite their differences as to the appropriateness of resorting to Community legal instruments,

both sides recognize that it is worthwhile encouraging the development of information and consultation practices in matters relating to the introduction of new technologies in the countries of the Community.

10. Furthermore, both sides note that, on the basis of a variety of practices, adaptability and flexibility are developing throughout the Community. To this end, the two sides confirm their readiness to continue the social dialogue on the implications which the introduction of the new technologies has in the field of adaptability and flexibility, particularly with a view to improving the competitiveness of European firms and conditions of work and employment.

Source: Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General V, Social Europe No.7/87

[1] *Unless provided by the firms themselves.*
[2] *Confindustria refers here to the arrangements arising out of collective agreements drawn up in Italy.*

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